

## Small Business Assistance Providers Forum Meeting January 7, 2003

Meeting Notes:

### Attendance:

Richard Rasmussen - DEQ, Chuck McCarty - DEQ, Dana Bayless - DCR, Mark Heede - DBA, Jim McKean - DBA, Richard Daly - EPA RIII, Catherine Harold - CBLAD, Adam Ebbin - DOLI, Ben Blumenthal - DRS, Bill Scruggs - VDACS, **Louise Ware - DPOR, Nichelle McDaniel - VDMBE**, Tracy Garland, Radford Univ., Sharon Baxter, DEQ.

**Note:** **Bold** indicates First time attendee.

### Welcome:

First time attendees welcomed.

### **Program Spotlight** (ongoing spotlight one program per meeting)

Louise Ware provided an overview and scope of the activities of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation. DPOR regulates 31 occupations and professions through 18 boards composed of practitioners and citizens appointed by the Governor. Additionally DPOR licenses or certifies more than 245,000 individuals and businesses ranging from architects and contractors to cosmetologists and professional wrestlers.

1. Work session begun to craft a Mission Statement for VA CAN.

#### **Draft Mission statement:**

" The *Virginia Comprehensive Assistance Network (VA CAN)* is a partnership of State, Federal and non-profit agencies and programs to benefit Virginia businesses. *VA CAN* is designed to facilitate communication both among its members and the business community.

The **mission** of *VA CAN* is to provide businesses with easy access to all providers of business information, services and assistance. The Network provides a vehicle for its partners to cooperate and leverage their individual resources."

2. Provided updated Draft of VA Can and discussed format of contact information. We need the listings requested in the follow-up to the November meeting email.

3. Outreach Events: Under Tracy Garland's commitment to help to establish a pilot outreach event it was decided that we would try to put together an event for delivery in Southwest VA, probably in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May to coincide with the state's Business Appreciation Week. Tracy will put together a proposal and send it to Richard who will then disseminate it to the group for vetting, questions, interest in participation. Prospectively it would be a session featuring the Va Can participants, displays/exhibits, and information provided to both small businesses, local organizations and local officials.

- a. Richard will speak with VACO, VML, and the State Chamber to make them aware and encourage their participation.

4. Research other documents that provide assistance to businesses and look at integration/reference for incorporation into VA Can. We again discussed ways to improve and enhance the Draft
  - Add preface
  - Add table of contents
  - Add index by topic
  - Add contact information both in text and as part of the index (similar to phone book blue pages)
  - Add business category breakout (construction, agriculture, medical, professional, manufacturing) to highlight relevant programs
  - Look at web version format would be slightly different eg. Hot links to reference documents and contacts.
  - Add some sizzle to the appearance. (Louellen will work with Preston on this - in process??)
5. Discussed additional partners: Look at inclusion of Tax Dept., State Corporation Commission, Social Services, organizations (trades), VACO, VML.
- 6.. A look at what other states have done: The Delaware materials were reviewed and it was expressed that there is some interest in incorporating some of their ideas.
7. Carryover from November: Use of Expert Systems - Maryland - Louellen will research. (possible project for future activity)

Future Activities: (includes ongoing\*)

Outreach Event - May

Pursue a potential activity with Tracy Garland. - Environmental Management Assistance Program, Radford Univ. - All in attendance expressed interest in being involved in the outreach efforts to business and local government depending on funding availability.

Expert systems?

\*Gordon Dixon suggested getting other business groups involved. Discussed creating a meeting program around association/business participation. Will probably have to wait until after the General Assembly session. Gordon agreed to coordinate.

\*Asked all participants to look at their existing networks for others that may have an interest in participating and provide contact information to Chuck & Richard.

\*Mark Heede already actively functioning in a call program with banks and economic developers around the state. Would be glad to deliver a "Provider" message as a part of his outreach.

**Again continued interest and enthusiasm was expressed to continue the Providers Forum meetings on a bi-monthly basis. Our NEXT MEETING - March 4, 2003, DEQ Piedmont Regional Office 10AM to 12:00 PM. Please RSVP by February 25, 2003.**

**We hope to see everyone there !**